

# ***Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity***

## **2010 Governor's Home Town Awards**

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### **CUP WINNER**

***Services & Mentorship***

***Population Category II***

***School Fair 2009 - Sponsored by the Community for Christ  
Assistance Center***

***Villages of Camp Point, Clayton, Golden and Coatsburg***

Community Unit #3 school district covers the villages of Camp Point, Clayton, Golden and Coatsburg in Western Illinois. According to the 2000 census, they have a combined population of 3,003 with only 48% of them in the labor force, 20% living in poverty and a per capita income of just over \$15,000 per year. Since 2004 the Community for Christ Assistance Center has provided emergency assistance for those in need. Food, clothing, household items, and funds for rent and utilities have all been given. The Assistance Center is directed by a Board made up of an individual from each participating church and operates on donations from the churches, businesses and individuals.

In April, 2009 the Board was approached by a Kindergarten teacher who communicated the need for a School Fair. "Back to School" time is expensive for families and children whose families could not afford the lengthy list of required supplies were sometimes stigmatized by their peers. The Center then went to work with the School District to organize their first School Fair.

Registration information was publicized and forms sent with waivers through the school district. The lists of required items for each grade were gained from the teachers. Not content with providing just pencils and paper, the Assistance Center decided to make available everything on the lists including backpacks and tennis shoes. In addition to the classroom needs, the local health department and medical professionals provided physicals, immunizations and dental exams. Local beauticians donated haircuts. Clothing vouchers from the Assistance Center's Thrift Store were provided to those who needed them. A library of free books for children to take home and a cookie shack for treats were also a part of the Fair. Cases of Kleenex and Clorox wipes were delivered to the classrooms after school started.

Monetary and materials donations were received from 23 area churches, as well as civic organizations and individuals. Every child in the district as well as home-schooled and religious-schooled students were eligible to receive the services offered with no financial guidelines required. The School Fair served all those that came, which numbered about 275, almost a third of the 900 students in Pre-K through 12th grade. The School Fair was highly successful, providing a "one-stop-shop" for everything a student needs to be prepared for a great school year.

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 70       |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,420    |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 5,500 |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 3,132 |

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# Governor's Cup Finalist

## *Population Category I*

### ***Memorials & Monuments***

#### ***Centralia #5 Coal Mine Memorial***

##### ***City of Wamac***

At 3:26 pm on March 25, 1947 tragedy struck in Wamac at the Centralia #5 Coal Mine. 111 coal miners lost their lives 540 feet below the surface. A coal dust explosion left 98 widows, 78 fatherless children and a grieving community that so touched the nation it is remembered today. The events of that fateful day and the investigation that followed were the catalyst for mine safety measures that were later enacted into law.

Although a plaque was placed by the Illinois State Historical Society in 1991 and a list of the men lost was displayed in Centralia's City Hall, no befitting memorial had been completed. The city of Wamac's Council discussed the long overdue memorial and committed funds to correct the delay. Volunteers then went to work on the design. The final design incorporated the original plaque and listed the names of the lost miners. A laser etching of the mine completed the reverse side of the black granite monument while a walkway to the memorial is bordered by coal.

Volunteers laid the brick foundation, set the memorial stone, donated the equipment necessary, and landscaped the area. They researched the tragedy and contacted families of the victims for pictures and mementos. Elected and union officials were contacted to participate in the unveiling. The project was publicized and consequently received an outpouring of thanks from across the nation.

On March 25, 2009 the fallen miners were honored with the dedication of the Centralia #5 Coal Mine Memorial. The mayors of Wamac, Centralia, and Central City signed a Proclamation declaring the week as Centralia #5 Mine Disaster Recognition Week. Over 350 people were on hand to participate in this long overdue moment. Celtic Pipers played "Amazing Grace" as the memorial was unveiled and a fallen miner's granddaughter sang "The Lord's Prayer." "The Dying Miner", composed in 1947 by Woody Guthrie to memorialize the disaster, was played. At 3:26 sirens and church bells tolled in remembrance as the name of each miner was read. Family members, coal mine union representatives, community leaders, volunteers and the public all shared in the somber moment. At last, the community could have closure.

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 50       |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 400      |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 1,500 |

Vicki Rodgers  
1382 Pearl Avenue  
Centralia, Illinois 62801  
618/292-3596  
[Vicki@karchmers.com](mailto:Vicki@karchmers.com)

# Governor's Cup Finalist

## *Population Category III*

### ***General***

#### ***Staunton FFA Alumni Association "Friends for Ag"***

##### ***City of Staunton***

Booster clubs are common for sports and musical groups, why not other extracurricular activities? The Staunton FFA has a long and proud tradition but was limited by a lack of financial support. A forward-thinking parent of an agricultural student presented the idea of forming an FFA support group to a group of like-minded friends. Soon after "Friends for Ag" was chartered.

As the association began and officers were elected, the new president strongly recommended the group should "think big, not small". This was the beginning of meeting the needs of individual students and the Staunton FFA organization.

To raise funds the "Friends of Ag" hold an annual fundraiser dinner and auction. The sold out events raise approximately \$28,500 annually. The auction includes big items like a John Deere Gator, a big screen TV and a zero turn lawn mower. A successful auction of such large items in a small rural community is a testament to shared values and commitment.

Additional monies have come from purchase/donate options. For example, if you purchased Red Wing boots at Prairietown Feed they donated \$15. And for every bag of Stine Seed corn purchased, \$5 was donated.

These fundraisers have allowed the "Friends of Ag" to award twenty-one \$1,000 scholarships over the last 3 years. The Association is also providing tools, protective gear and equipment to the high school Industrial and Ag classrooms in support of the teacher's efforts. Members are giving of their time and knowledge to aid in the education process of these young students.

Not only is the FFA Alumni Association providing for the needs of the students, they are also increasing the awareness of agriculture and Ag education in the community. Participation in parades and sesquicentennial have helped to create interest.

Agriculture education and the FFA in Staunton are growing stronger due to the results of the FFA Alumni Association. The "Friends for Ag" volunteers are creating an environment where students can develop their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success.

|                                   |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 100+               |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | Unlimited          |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 34,840 annually |
| Private Funds Raised:             | annually \$ 28,500 |

City of Staunton – Mayor John Willmon  
304 West Main  
Staunton, IL 62088  
618/635-8250  
[mayor@stauntonil.com](mailto:mayor@stauntonil.com)

# Governor's Cup Finalist

## *Population Category IV*

### ***Services & Mentorship***

#### ***City of Country Club Hills Mentoring Program***

#### ***City of Country Club Hills***

In the spring of 2008, a young person was murdered in Country Club Hills. Neighbors and friends called upon a local Alderman to find ways that would prevent this from happening again. This was the beginning of the Country Club Hills Mentoring Program.

Eleven adult men and women volunteered to help, understanding that young people needed positive role models. Each of the volunteers possesses special skills. The combination of skills, plus determination provides drive for the Mentoring Program. The City donated two modular classrooms for meetings and trainings and provided buses for field trips.

The group's goal is to provide comprehensive, high-quality high school and college preparation for our youth to facilitate their success in life. Empowering youth with needed skills, enriching their education by providing academic support, and offering career and life planning for access to better jobs, enables each young person to feel proud about their achievements.

Mentors helped each student create an Action Plan for college goals. This began with a Financial Seminar that covered the basics: how to open a bank account, what the differences were between checking and savings accounts, and how to seek scholarships and grants for college. Next, speakers were brought in to cover other topics. Resume writing, communication and interview skills, and dressing for success were essential skills covered. Speakers also talked about anger management, character traits and conflict management. Hearing about the importance of college is one thing, seeing it first-hand is another, and so tours were set up. Twenty-eight students toured DeVry University while 32 toured ITT.

After this intensive introduction to continuing education, 10 students have decided to apply to DeVry and 5 plan to apply to ITT's Architect program. In addition, the current grades of participating students have improved. Every young man and woman has potential and should have the opportunity to be successful and exceed their expectations. They have a responsibility to their families, the community, and the world. The Country Club Hills Mentoring Program is helping the young people of today meet their expectations of tomorrow.

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 14        |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,588     |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 46,944 |

James Ford  
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# Governor's Cup Finalist

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## *Population Category V*

### ***Beautification & Sustainability***

#### ***A-May-Zing Mundelein***

#### ***Village of Mundelein***

The Village of Mundelein developed a number of community-based programs to help identify and solve issues of minorities, young people involved with gangs, alcohol, drugs, and other quality of life issues that faced the Village and its residents. Our mission is to bring together individuals to create an environment that provides members of the community with the life skills, recreational activities and opportunities to reach their full potential and become productive citizens.

One of the organized events is held in May, thus the name "A-May-Zing Mundelein – A Day of Caring". The event was designed to bring together the residents of the community to work side-by-side with the senior citizens. Volunteers came from local schools, Boy and Girl Scout troops, churches, park districts and many more. Helping hands assisted seniors with planting, yard work, painting, and clean up projects. Additional focus was city-wide, with pick up of litter on the streets, park clean-up and playground equipment repair.

Besides the beautification of our community, this program serves two other purposes. First, it helps to bridge the generation gap, creating bonds between youth and seniors. More importantly, it fosters responsibility in young people by creating rewarding alternatives to become involved in the community instead of turning to gangs and illegal activity.

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 271      |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 2,168    |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 5,500 |

Raymond J. Rose, Chief of Police  
221 North Lake Street  
Mundelein, IL 60060  
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# Governor's Cup Finalist

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## *Population Category VI*

### ***Services & Mentorship***

#### ***Children with Disabilities Holiday Party***

#### ***Township of Schaumburg***

Inclusion can take many forms, from being invited to a birthday party, to being picked for a game of baseball. While achieving this feeling of acceptance can be difficult for even the most sociable of individuals, it is a common obstacle for the 90 million Americans who are directly affected by disability. The Township of Schaumburg has aimed to remedy this issue through both advocacy and community education, with its Children with Disabilities Holiday Party being an event that embodies these ideals.

For over 25 years, this party has been almost completely organized by volunteers. They determine details, select a theme, make entertainment choices and incorporate suggestions from the previous year, and wrap presents! Every child under the age of 16, as well as any siblings, receives a present that is age-appropriate for their mental capacity. The day of the party, volunteers help register, assist as chaperones, serve food and decorate. Of course, Santa Claus comes to visit, also played by a volunteer.

All of the event's financial backing has come from generous community contributions. Two local sports teams send their mascots and a school's choir sings carols. The event is free for everyone involved.

Due to the program's enduring presence and continued expansion, it has not only provided a supportive environment for the disabled, it has also become a venue for the public to educate themselves about America's largest minority group.

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 45       |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 240      |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 5,400 |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 1,950 |

Gerry Bartnicke  
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# *Special Award for Outstanding Community Volunteerism*

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## ***City of Columbia***

*"Volunteering creates a national character in which the community and the nation take on a spirit of compassion, comradeship and confidence." - Brian O'Connell*

The City of Columbia applied for a Governor's Home Town Award for the first time this year - for five projects! After completion of the judging it was evident that the citizens of Columbia have an outstanding volunteer spirit. Nominations included:

### Sand Bank School Restoration

The historic Sand Bank schoolhouse would likely have been demolished if not for the efforts of volunteers. The one-room white clapboard school, built in 1855 was in poor repair and up for sale. A retired high school principal and his friend purchased the school. Carpenters donated their skills to straighten the eastern wall of windows and reconstructed the foundation of the old coal shed. A local philanthropist provided funds to meet the immediate need of roof repair. The Monroe County Highway Department cleared the overgrowth of weeds that had overtaken the site. Others donated the septic system, concrete, and window glazing.

An innovative partnership was created with the high school Construction Trades classes. Students gutted the inside of the building, helped run electricity, installed plasterboard, and assisted in the heating and cooling system. The students learned valuable skills through hands-on experience as well as helped to save a historic icon of education.

### Play Day

When Columbia was named "A Playful City" in a national recognition program for communities creating an agenda for play, they celebrated by having "A Play Day". The free day was full of activities and fun including Frisbee Golf, Punt/Pass/Kick, Parachute Toss, Yarn Spider Web, Recycle City and many more. A scavenger hunt was held to help participants "discover" Bolm-Schuhkraft Memorial City Park. Attendees had the opportunity to become "Park Pals", a program to engage young citizens to read and obey park rules, control litter and report abuse or safety issues.

### Holiday House Tour

In 10 years Columbia's population had doubled, causing an increasingly cramped children's area in the Library. The Friends of the Library recognized the need and decided to hold a Holiday House Tour to raise funds for additional space. Volunteers solicited hosts for the tour and goods for the raffle, prepared refreshments for the registration point, created promotional materials, and sold tickets. The Tour raised \$3,597. The funds provided a larger space for the children's area with fixtures scaled to their sizes and needs.

### Art on the Bluffs

The Art on the Bluffs Art Walk was created to highlight Columbia's art and architecture during the community's sesquicentennial. Ten months of meetings culminated in historic Main Street's transformation to an "Art Walk" staffed by more than 100 volunteers. Sixty-seven professional artists lined the street both outside and in thirty-one locations. The Kid's Area was a great success, as children were encouraged to actively participate in creating a variety of artwork, including using recycled materials as well as painting a large mural. The broad range of artists, musicians, and dancers assured all of the 2,500 patrons attending would find something of interest and enjoy the Art Walk.

### Kiwanis Car Show

The Annual Columbia Kiwanis Car Show has evolved into a yearly event with 100% of the proceeds used to fund the Kiwanis Educational Enrichment Program at Parkview Elementary. Better known as K.E.E.P., the program fills a gap in the educational process for at risk youth between the 2nd and 5th grades who were in danger of falling behind in reading skills. \$5,000 has been donated annually for after-school tutoring. The success of the program has been determined through

increased standardized test scores in reading. Consequently, the school district worked the reading program into their budget. Now funds from the K.E.E.P. program assist in tutoring in mathematics.

Besides the long-term educational benefits to the area children, more than 250 cars, music, and good food combine for the largest show in the area and enjoyment of the community.

All Projects

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 410       |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 2,524     |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 14,080 |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 41,170 |

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## Project Winners

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### Category I Communities with a Population of 0 - 1,500

#### ***Beautification & Sustainability***

##### ***Gardner Memory Gazebo***

##### ***Village of Gardner***

Gardner Commissioner Gary Cox pledged in his campaign to beautify the village and make it a better place to live. Once elected, he formed a committee to brainstorm projects to raise community spirit. The committee's aggressive agenda included construction of a Memory Gazebo in a vacant parcel along Route 66.

The Gazebo was funded entirely on donations, both in-kind and in cash. Creation of a design in keeping with historic structures was provided by a local firm. Engineers, contractors, electricians and other professionals provided their services and materials. Businesses donated food and drinks to the volunteers installing the landscaping. Memory bricks served as a fundraiser as well as integral part of the project design. The Gardner Senior Citizens Group donated \$9,000 in seed money, while Commissioner Cox gave his first year's salary, \$3,694, towards the project.

Now serving as the centerpiece for social gatherings, the Gazebo is an ongoing project. A 25 foot pine tree was placed next to the Gazebo to serve as the Community Christmas Tree. A mural was painted on a building wall across from the site, showing the original gazebo constructed in the Village's West Park, which was removed in the late 1950's.

Memories were made as well as shared while the Gazebo was built, and more memories will occur at this new local landmark.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 30        | Randy Wilkey   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,079     | 310 W. Jefferson Street  |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 32,645 | Gardner, IL 60424  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 21,294 | 815/405-8145   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:Gfd6601randy@netscape.net">Gfd6601randy@netscape.net</a> |

#### ***Parks & Recreation***

##### ***Grafton Ball Field Restoration***

##### ***City of Grafton***

The Great Flood of 1993 literally devastated the small community of Grafton. With the help of the federal government, the city forged ahead with recovery, growth, and development.

The one Grafton landmark left off the flood recovery agenda was the Ball Park, located near where the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers meet. The Park harbored memories of baseball games, Community Picnics, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks and parades. For 17 years the park was in a state of abandoned disrepair.

In the spring of 2009, a citizens group approached the city with a passionate appeal to restore this landmark. The city's stretched budget meant most of the project would have to be done by volunteers and private funds. In spite of the momentous task, the group moved forward.

Volunteers removed the debris and determined the entire park should be raised four feet due to its proximity to the rivers. Dirt, topsoil and the trucks to move it were all donated while other businesses provided the fuel to operate the equipment. Over the hot summer months, the area was prepared for grass seeding, fertilizing and watering.

# Project Winners

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## Category I Communities with a Population of 0 - 1,500

Inspired to build on their success, plans are now underway to add a small picnic area, a fishing pier and a basketball court. The impact of this positive project is a belief that dedicated; committed people can build a "field of dreams".

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 35        | Mayor Tom Thompson   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,400     | City Hall, 118 Main Street   |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 80,000 | Grafton, IL 62037  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 4,600  | 618/786-3344   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:cityofgraffton@gtec.com">cityofgraffton@gtec.com</a> |

### ***History & Historic Preservation Gathering of Elizabeths Village of Elizabeth***

On June 24, 1832, 200 warriors led by Chief Black Hawk attacked the Apple River Fort. About 45 men, women and children were inside. The men scrambled for the guns, leaped to the firing benches and took their places at the block house portholes. The women, three of which were named Elizabeth, molded musket balls and loaded weapons so that the men could keep up a steady stream of fire. The battle raged for about 45 minutes. Black Hawk, thinking the fort was heavily armed, abandoned the battle. Local legend says the nearby village was named for the heroines.

On June 27, 2009 the community honored the heroines with a "gathering of Elizabeths." The event would also celebrate the reopening of the Apple River Fort historic site, closed over the winter due to state budget cuts, and bring visitors to the community of 650. Living history activities were held at the Fort with a background of 1800's music. The Great Western Railroad Museum and Village Park hosted ageless activities and games. Each Elizabeth received a T-shirt and participated in a group photo.

The community almost tripled its' population drawing an estimated 1,200 people to the area. 364 were named Elizabeth and came from as far as Hawaii. Queen Elizabeth sent her regrets. The event also drew national media coverage from the Associated Press and UPI. Over 70 volunteers made sure the event went smoothly and was fun for all.

|                                   |          |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 70       | Dan Tindell  |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 500      | Apple River Fort   |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 2,600 | Post Office Box 206  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 3,200 | Elizabeth, Illinois 61028  |
|                                   |          | 815/281-1932   |
|                                   |          | <a href="mailto:director@appleriverfort.org">director@appleriverfort.org</a> |

### ***Services & Mentorship Grafton Food Pantry City of Grafton***

Grafton is a community classified as a low to moderate income city. The economic downturn along with the loss of the town's only grocery store created a near crisis-level demand for emergency food. A group of caring community volunteers requested the City of Grafton provide space for a food pantry. Two rooms previously used for storage were allocated. Volunteers cleaned, painted, installed shelves, and moved furniture to make a home for Grafton's Food Pantry.

Numerous methods were used to ensure the Pantry was fully stocked. Food drives were held at churches, schools and even the water park. The Grafton Grade School donated over 1,100 food items in a single food drive. With the assistance of a small grant, the City of Grafton developed a Community Garden, providing fresh and healthy food. Goodwill donations were given at a free

## Project Winners

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### Category I Communities with a Population of 0 - 1,500

country singer's concert as well as weekly concerts in the park, and many businesses and citizens gave personal donations.

In addition to meeting the nutritional needs of every individual requesting help, the Food Pantry made sure everyone in the community enjoyed the holidays. Over 40 families received traditional Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinners with all the trimmings.

There is no greater good than providing the basic need of nutrition. From humble beginnings to a fully functional food distribution center, the caring citizens of Grafton have risen to the challenge.

|                                   |          |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteer Hours:  | 19       | Mayor Tom Thompson   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 900      | City Hall, 118 E. Main Street                                      |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 6,200 | Grafton, IL 62037  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 3,200 | 618/786-3344   |
|                                   |          | <a href="mailto:cityofgrafton@gtec.com">cityofgrafton@gtec.com</a> |

#### **General**

#### ***Ullin Park District***

#### ***Village of Ullin***

In small communities across Illinois community parks are the focal point for many activities, from summer ball games to family picnics. Young children enjoy the playground most. In Ullin, the old, wooden playground equipment had fallen into dangerous disrepair.

Fortunately, the community had forfeited drug funds. It seemed appropriate to use these funds in a positive way for future generations. \$5,000 in additional funds were provided by the Park Committee, which they had saved over the years from an annual softball tournament fundraiser.

Replacing the wooden playground equipment with more durable and safer metal items was the best long-term plan. The community wished to spend their money in Illinois if possible. They searched for and found a playground equipment company in Red Bud, Illinois. To minimize costs, volunteers made the two hour trek with three trucks and trailers to pick up the equipment. Once back in Ullin, volunteers also unloaded and set up the playground. The Village provided food and drinks, turning the work into a fun, family picnic.

Now the park is full of happy children playing, made possible without any money from the taxpayers in Ullin. The park is a source of pride and has greatly contributed to the quality of life for the community.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 25        | Mayor Mike DeWitt  |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 750       | Post Office Box 187  |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 23,000 | Ullin, Illinois 62292                                      |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 5,000  | 618/697-1748   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:mikenmille@msn.com">mikenmille@msn.com</a> |

## Project Winners

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### Category II

#### Communities with a Population of 1,501 – 5,000

##### ***History and Historic Preservation***

##### ***Savanna Museum and Cultural Center***

##### ***City of Savanna***

Due to closings from major employers, Savanna is economically depressed but has a wealth of natural beauty. Just 2 miles north is Mississippi Palisades State Park, which charms 500,000 visitors annually. Yet to experience cultural activities, residents and visitors had to travel to Iowa or the Quad Cities.

Thus the need for the Savanna Historical Society. Plans were made to develop a museum of high quality with an emphasis on the Civil War and Railroad history of the area. The Society raised enough funds to buy a charismatic 1890s building which will be preserved yet adaptively reused. Volunteers have tunneled through solid limestone walls to install electrical, installed a geothermal HVAC system, created restrooms, drywalled, painted, and refinished floors.

Those not working on the building are working on what is going in the building. Areas railroad buffs are donating their time and skills to recreate a HO scale model of the Savanna rail yards in the 1950s. A collection of over 100 life size mannequins dressed in authentic Civil War uniforms has been given to the museum. In addition, three programs are scheduled from the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholars.

There is no doubt that the Savanna Museum and Cultural Center will become an educational destination, greatly enhancing the area for tourists and members of the community.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 50        | Larry Stebbins, Mayor  |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 7,500     | Main and Washington Streets                                  |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$250,000 | Savanna, IL 61074  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 70,000 | 815/273-2251   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:mayor@savanna-il.us">mayor@savanna-il.us</a> |

##### ***General***

##### ***Casey in Action***

##### ***City of Casey***

Citizens in Casey were concerned about continuing decay in the community. Small businesses were giving way under the twin pressures of big box stores and online availability, the oil industry that once employed many had bottomed out, and properties were deteriorating. Closure of a manufacturing facility in 2009 was the final catalyst to bring like-minded people together to discuss the issues.

Brainstorming led to project ideas and goals. First was the facade renovation of the Senior Social Center. Volunteers carted debris, replaced the windows and painted the front of the building. As a result, the senior citizens using the center became involved.

From there, CIA tackled other community needs. Two Appliance Collection days were instituted, additional facades were upgraded, downtown benches and planters installed. Creation of a pet food drive for low-income people with pets brought in 3,500 pounds of food and creation of a humane society and building for a Pet Food Pantry. New playground equipment and creation of a skate park benefited the youth. CIA worked to ensure business retention by working with the City to create a permanent development staff position. Finally, the group celebrated their heritage with a fall Harvest Festival.

## Project Winners

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### Category II Communities with a Population of 1,501 – 5,000

Perhaps the most important long term impact Casey In Action has is the fostering of a spirit of involvement and awareness. Signs of CIA's impact can be seen all over town, and the name is synonymous with positive change.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 134       | Nicole Weigand   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,806     | Post Office Box 425  |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 11,391 | Casey, IL 62420  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 20,384 | 217/932-4074   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:nweigand@mchsi.com">nweigand@mchsi.com</a> |

#### ***Services and Mentorship Mt. Olive Academic Foundation City of Mt. Olive***

The community of Mt. Olive believes that "Children are the Future". The Mt. Olive Academic Foundation was developed to help the local school district purchase items they could not be able to afford within their budget. This is especially important when the State is having budgetary difficulties in providing timely funding.

To gain funds, approximately 3,500 brochures are sent out to all graduates of the School District and all local businesses highlighting the need and benefits of the Foundation.

Grant applications are sent to district staff for them to request what is needed. This year that list included: Promethean Boards for the Elementary School, computers to incorporate AutoSkills, graphic calculators, funds for Field Trips and Assemblies, a Fairy Tale Garden, supplies for the Science Fair, bringing the Star Lab, incentives for High School Juniors to perform well on Prairie State Exams, Palm Pilots and portable printers for registration. The Foundation was able to fulfill all the requests.

One program showed exceptional impact. In the high school a computer lab specifically for the AutoSkill program provides computer based reading and math interventions. Students enrolled in the program demonstrated significant gains in both

The Mt. Olive Academic Foundation is assuring students have every opportunity to succeed in our ever changing economic society.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 14        | Patrick Murphy   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 400       | 804 W. Main Street   |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 500    | Mt. Olive, IL 62069  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$800,000 | 217/999-7831   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:pmurphy@mtoliveschools.org">pmurphy@mtoliveschools.org</a> |

## Project Winners

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### Category III

#### Communities with a Population of 5,001 – 10,000

##### ***Parks & Recreation***

##### ***JF Edwards Softball/Baseball Complex***

##### ***City of Geneseo***

In June 2009, the “if you build it, they will come” mantra came true in Geneseo. When the baseball diamond was needed for youth soccer, three creative minds looked at using existing diamonds at the school district. They were in poor shape and the current layout could not meet the needs of the community. However, measurements showed the space could accommodate a new 4 diamond, wagon wheel designed softball/baseball facility.

With the support of over 200 community members and businesses, Geneseo is now home to the JF Edwards Softball/Baseball Complex, complete with a two story combination press box/concession stand /restrooms/storage building. The new design includes a 123 space paved parking lot where there was no parking lot before.

The complex was completed in less than one year through 100% private donations, volunteer labor and gifts-in-kind. The entire project, valued at just over \$1.2 million, was finished spending less than \$300,000 due to the volunteer efforts of the Community.

Approximately 1400 youth participate in some activity at the complex. In addition, the facility's championship quality caliber will allow for hosting regional playoff games. Tournament visitors will in turn add to the local economy by staying in Geneseo's motels and dining in their restaurants.

Geneseo can point to the JF Edwards Complex with pride, knowing it will serve the community well for years to come.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 200+      | Brad Toone   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 4,000     | 119 S. State Street  |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$979,950 | Geneseo, Illinois 61254  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$250,000 | 309-944-5151   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:bradt@hanford-ins.com">bradt@hanford-ins.com</a> |

##### ***History & Historic Preservation***

##### ***The American Thresherman Association 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

##### ***City of Pinckneyville***

Over the years antique farming equipment has been pushed aside to be forgotten in the weeds or become scrap. There is a need to preserve and protect America's agricultural heritage, its' artifacts, and its' culture for future generations.

In response, the American Thresherman Association was developed and now holds 2 annual events lasting 4 days each. The shows include educational displays of plowing, wheat threshing, apple butter making, hundreds of antique tractors, fired steam engines, gas engines, and a working steam powered saw mill. Grandfathers share stories of "how it used to be done". Children of all ages come out to enjoy the show and take the half mile ride on the miniature steam train.

The project continues to grow and thrive. The City of Pinckneyville provides use of the grounds for the events and storage facilities for equipment that will not fit in the Thresherman's own buildings. A lease to use ground owned by the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources was negotiated with the help of Senator Luechtefeld. And the Association holds another lease to plant crops (the old-fashioned way) each spring.

The success of the Association has brought 50 years of enjoyment to Southern Illinois. Nearly 20,000 people are estimated to attend the events annually. Because of the American Thresherman

## Project Winners

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### Category III Communities with a Population of 5,001 – 10,000

Association, early farming techniques have been preserved for the education of generations to come.

|                                   |            |  |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 50+        | Carrie Gilliam   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 7,000+     | 104 S. Walnut  |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 10,000+ | Pinckneyville, IL 62274  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 30,000  | 618/357-8775   |
|                                   |            | <a href="mailto:Economic.development@frontier.com">Economic.development@frontier.com</a> |

#### ***Services & Mentorship Mascoutah Food Pantry City of Mascoutah***

The City of Mascoutah Food Pantry has been in operation for more than 30 years. Operated by Concerned Christians, the 370 square foot Pantry relies on donations from the community, its churches, schools, and special food drives. When food donations are insufficient, the Pantry purchases food with monetary donations.

A Situational Analysis in late 2008 showed the cost of purchased food had tripled in 3 years and the number of families requiring help had increased 21 percent. The need for additional space was critical. An unoccupied building on Main Street was identified and a no-lease agreement negotiated. However, the building was in disrepair.

Professional homebuilders, electricians, plumbers, plasterers, landscapers and scores of others went to work on the 2,000 square foot space. Other volunteers provided lunches. The library donated shelving. The alarm system, gutters and lock sets were also donated. The city coordinated zoning and code requirements and utilities. The renovation was complete in a little over two months but the food still had to be moved.

Drawing on volunteers once again, 320 people lined three city blocks between the facilities on a Saturday afternoon. Food was then passed hand-to-hand, like a bucket brigade. The local Post Office provided mail baskets to put the food in. Volunteers wore T-shirts reading "I Helped Move the Mascoutah Food Pantry". With so much help, the move took only 1 hour.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 365       | Chris von der Linden                                   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,214     | 1655 Golf Course Drive                                 |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 11,000 | Belleville, Illinois 62220                             |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 61,000 | 618/409-1592   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:cvd167@yahoo.com">cvdl67@yahoo.com</a> |



# Project Winners

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## Category IV

### Communities with a Population of 10,001 – 25,000

#### ***History & Historic Preservation***

##### ***Dixon Heritage Crossing***

###### ***City of Dixon***

The Rock River has long been an asset for Dixon, attracting residential and industrial growth. But as the industrial climate changed, the area had become a dumping ground for trash. Efforts to revitalize the downtown and surrounding area put a new focus on the Riverfront.

The project began a decade ago with "Town Hall" meetings. Meetings provided rigorous discussion about the needs and uses of the Riverfront. Next step was unveiling the proposed Heritage Crossing Project drawings. They included a terraced riverfront plaza between the Galena and Peoria Avenue bridges. The design centered around a large memorial fountain showcasing a life size status of Dixon's native son, President Ronald Reagan, on horseback. This plaza provided an overlook for the river with stairways flanking both sides to provide access to the lower river walk. Seating forms an amphitheater for people to gather or enjoy performers.

After design completion, a "funding summit" was held to entice donations. Approximately 45 businesses and people attended that day. Additional awareness was created through a brochure, and booths at the Petunia Festival and Reagan Trail Days.

A dedication in August 2009 marked the end of Phase 1 of the project. Spearheaded by volunteers on the Riverfront Commission the Dixon Park Board, Dixon Main Street, the local Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, the Riverfront in Dixon is once again a place the community can be proud of.

|                                   |             |  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 65          | Larry Reed   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 11,863      | 810 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue                             |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$105,000   | Dixon, IL 61021  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$1,240,000 | 815/288-4674   |
|                                   |             | <a href="mailto:reedle@grics.net">reedle@grics.net</a> |

#### ***Beautification & Sustainability***

##### ***Murals on Main Street***

###### ***City of Pontiac***

During four of the hottest days of the 2009 summer, the City of Pontiac was alive with art, artists, and everyone who appreciates history, beauty, and civic pride. Over an extended weekend, over 150 international artists painted 18 large outdoor murals in the downtown business district of Pontiac. Each mural illustrates a historical theme and serves not only as public art, but a lasting reminder of the city's rich heritage.

At a time when things had been spiraling downward, the "Walldog meet" brought new life to the community. Walldogs are a loosely knit group of professional sign painters, muralists, and other artists who gather once a year to paint murals in a selected city. But the project takes much more than artists. Volunteers begin planning two years in advance. Locations had to be selected, walls repaired, and supplies ordered. The artists needed food to eat and a place to sleep. Endless details needed to be covered.

Home to numerous other events each year, Pontiac decided to hold 2 in conjunction with the Murals on Main Street event. The Rustic Auto Show draws enthusiasts from statewide and was scheduled to add another layer of excitement. The Heritage Days Festival was moved to June. Historic displays, heritage craft and skill demonstrations, contests and live music added to the surge of civic pride.



# Governor's Home Town Awards 2010

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## Category IV

### Communities with a Population of 10,001 – 25,000

The Wall Dogs will move on to somewhere else next year but there's no doubt they left a lasting impression on Pontiac, as the citizens of Pontiac did on them.

|                                  |           |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:      | 545       | Robert Karls   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:           | 13,045    | 115 W. Howard Street   |
| Total Value of Donated Material: | \$150,000 | Pontiac, IL 61764  |
| Private Funds Raised:            | \$ 77,500 | 815/844-3396   |
|                                  |           | <a href="mailto:Bob.karls@pontiac.org">Bob.karls@pontiac.org</a> |

#### ***Memorials & Monuments***

##### ***Bourbonnais' Veteran Freedom Sign***

##### ***Village of Bourbonnais***

Bourbonnais is home to Fortin Villa, the Olivet Nazarene University Reserve Officers' Training Corps program. Approximately 1,200 active members of the military and 1,300 veterans make their home in Bourbonnais.

The purpose of the Freedom Sign, located in front of the ROTC building along US Route 45/52 is to honor local military personnel. The sign serves as a reminder so we do not forget the sacrifices that countless soldiers have endured for the sake of our country's freedom.

The Veterans Freedom Sign is a three-sided sign, with two sides facing South Main Street. The lighted sign has the names of veteran's scrolling across the sign at specific times throughout the day. Special displays recognize days such as service branch anniversaries, military campaign statistics, ROTC Commission date, and other special holidays.

Volunteers solicited businesses, veterans and individuals, raising \$65,000 in donations for the sign. Olivet Nazarene University provided the remainder.

The Freedom Sign has instilled a new source of pride in our community and our country, and all those who serve.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 20        | Laurie Cyr   |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 80        | 600 Main Street N.W.   |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 65,000 | Bourbonnais, IL 60914  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 30,000 | 815/802-5323   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:cyr1@villageofbourbonnais.com">cyr1@villageofbourbonnais.com</a> |

#### ***General***

##### ***Operation Now***

##### ***County of White***

Operation NOW serves the homeless and hopeless population with a goal to provide for their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. An Advisory Board of various churches and professionals oversees the volunteer organization. In 2009, Operation Now's mission was met through 5 specific programs.

The "Bread Ministry" provides bread for up to 30 food banks which distribute to over 1,000 families. Operation Now makes the trip to a St. Louis bakery and brings back an average of 1,800 loaves of bread each week.

The "Angel Tree" provides Christmas gifts for the children of incarcerated parents.

"Feed My Sheep" supplements the area's "Meals on Wheels" program by providing weekend dinners to 70 elderly and shut-ins. Each meal includes a personalized scripture stuck to the sealed top.

# Governor's Home Town Awards 2010

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## Category IV

### Communities with a Population of 10,001 – 25,000

Although many needy children are provided reduced/no cost meals during school, the same quality of food is not available on the weekends. "Feed My Lambs" provides about 200 students with backpacks loaded with enough food for a month's weekend breakfasts, dinners, fruit and snacks.

A 17 foot trailer took the "Sunday School Jam" on the road 14 days to communities all over Illinois. The Jam includes a puppet ministry, songs, and a mascot. A light meal is served.

Through these programs, Operation Now is making an impact, not only on the lives of who they reach out to but also those providing the hand. Its' measure can not be seen in statistics alone. Perhaps it is best measured in the smiles it brings.

Total Number of Volunteers: 85  
Total Volunteer Hours: 15,012  
Total Value of Donated Materials: \$439,200  
Private Funds Raised: \$ 19,025

Dr. James Williams  
P.O. Box 7  
Norris City, IL 62869  
[opnow@yourclearwave.com](mailto:opnow@yourclearwave.com)

## Project Winners

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### Category V

#### Communities with a Population of 25,001 - 70,000

##### ***History & Historic Preservation***

##### ***City of Wheaton Sesquicentennial***

##### ***City of Wheaton***

A group of community volunteers decided one day wasn't enough to celebrate 150 years. For Wheaton's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on February 24, 2009, they organized a yearlong party, inviting thousands to celebrate the guest of honor: The City of Wheaton!

The year kicked off with the Fourth of July Parade, welcoming more than 70,000 people to "Celebrate Wheaton – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," the party's theme. Other activities ensued, the most notable of which were a gala raising nearly \$200,000 for 15 local nonprofit organizations, a Choir and Family Heritage Festival that included the world premier of "How Exalted Your Name" by Dr. Tony Payne, written specifically for the celebration, and nearly 1,100 residents attempting to break the Guinness World Record for flying kites simultaneously. Contents of a 1959 time capsule were revealed and a new capsule to be opened in 2059 was created.

The community took a strategic approach to organization, including committees for Outreach, Marketing, Special Events, History and Fundraising. Funding for the event came from donations, sponsorships, merchandise sales, brick pavers, special events and seed money from the City.

Fifty years from now the residents of Wheaton will open the 2009 time capsule. How proud they will be of the way the community came together to celebrate all that makes Wheaton a wonderful community in which to live!

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 125       |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 1,800     |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 8,800  |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$383,200 |

Susan Wallace, Special Projects Assistant  
303 W. Wesley Street  
Wheaton, IL 60287-0727  
630/260-2064  
[swallace@wheaton.il.us](mailto:swallace@wheaton.il.us)

##### ***Services & Mentorship***

##### ***Oswego Senior Center***

##### ***Village of Oswego***

The senior population in most Illinois towns is growing dynamically. Oswego and Kendall County have ranked among the fastest growing communities in America for most of the last decade. Seniors are living longer and have expanding needs for nutritional, social, recreational, and educational opportunities in their daily lives. Although the Village of Oswego had a commission focused on the needs of Seniors, one pressing need, "a home", remained unmet.

Enter a large vacant building, and all its' possibilities. In addition to needing a Senior Center, Oswego's YMCA was space starved in its' current building and several school district offices needed to be expanded. Cooperative agreements were made between all three to convert the vacant junior high school into the District 308 Community Center to meet the needs of all. The Oswego Seniors finally have a home - more than 10,000 square-feet in all. It was already equipped with a kitchen and cafeteria, had classroom space for crafts, education, exercise and social activities, and had several counseling and administrative offices.

The primary goals of the Oswego Senior Center focus on developing and delivering services and programs that will help Oswego area Seniors lead happier, healthier, longer, and higher quality of life existences. Staffed largely by volunteers, more than 500 Seniors have been served since the

## Project Winners

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### Category V

#### Communities with a Population of 25,001 - 70,000

Center opened. There is true value, immense energy, and demonstrated synergy with the Oswego Senior Center.

|                                   |           |  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers:       | 74        | Gary Adams, Village Administrator                            |
| Total Volunteer Hours:            | 13,232    | 100 Parkers Mill   |
| Total Value of Donated Materials: | \$ 44,200 | Oswego, IL 60543   |
| Private Funds Raised:             | \$ 9,485  | 630/554-3618   |
|                                   |           | <a href="mailto:gadams@oswegoil.org">gadams@oswegoil.org</a> |

#### **General**

#### ***Hanover Park Environmental Committee – Household Recycling Event Village of Hanover Park***

Saving the environment is a world-wide concern and the Village of Hanover Park shares this concern. Therefore, the Environmental Committee of Hanover Park was formed to prevent pollution, reduce waste, and recycle.

At its inception, the committee tried to find ways to do all of the above. The first was to begin an electronics recycling program. Old computers, printers, televisions, etc. were collected from residents and turned over to an electronics recycling firm to keep these hazards out of our landfills. The next big project was the Household Recycling Event. Not only did the committee collect hazardous materials such as oil, anti-freeze, batteries, and CFL light bulbs to keep our earth free from contamination, but also collected items that could be recycled such as eye glasses, bicycles, and clothing. The response to this event was overwhelming. Two Boy Scout Troops, the Lions Club, C.E.R.T., S.C.A.R.C.E. and several recycling companies all assisted with the event. Events were at the Municipal Center with Public Works providing traffic control and set up.

Over 11,000 pounds of electronics, 1,250 pounds of shredded documents, 80 gallons of oil or antifreeze, 40 auto batteries, 65 cell phones and 17 eyeglasses were among the items recycled due to the new program. If more towns held events like this, what a difference it would make not only on our physical environment, but in community camaraderie helping to save our earth.

|                             |     |  |
|-----------------------------|-----|--|
| Total Number of Volunteers: | 32  | Howard A. Killian  |
| Total Volunteer Hours:      | 200 | 2121 West Lake Street                                    |
|                             |     | Hanover Park, IL 60133                                   |
|                             |     | 630/372-4440   |
|                             |     | <a href="mailto:hkillian@hpil.org">hkillian@hpil.org</a> |

## Project Winner

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### Category VI Communities with a Population over 70,000

#### *General*

#### *Cup of Tea Discussions*

#### *City of Chicago*

New immigrants fantasize of achieving the American dream but quickly learn that opportunities do not come easily when they lack adequate resources and language skills. Many become isolated from mainstream society and struggle to improve their lives.

The Chinese American Service league (CASL) is a nurturing hub within the heart of Chinatown that connects families and individuals of all ages with the vital resources they need to flourish physically, economically, mentally, and socially, enabling them to thrive and contribute to the Chicago community. In March 2009, CASL's volunteer force created Cup of Tea Discussions, which teaches conversational English using everyday life situations such as asking for directions and reporting emergencies. Over tea, clients feel less pressure and with less focus on grammar, students quickly learn common English phrases and idioms that help them succeed in their daily lives.

Cup of Tea Discussions are held for 2 hours every Saturday. Volunteers prepare for class by producing lessons and handouts. Each lesson covers a different topic that includes vocabulary, common phrases and expressions, dialogues, discussion questions and occasionally, American customs. Groups are divided into Mandarin and Cantonese speaking and subdivided into beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Groups are typically 4 or 5 students and a teacher.

This completely volunteer driven program has given immigrants a voice and the confidence they need to achieve their dreams.

Total Number of Volunteers: 14  
Total volunteer Hours: 465  
Total Value of Donated Materials: \$ 1,440

Bernarda Wong, CASL President  
2141 S. Tan Court  
Chicago, IL 60616  
312/791-0418  
adminis@caslservice.org

## Previous Governor's Home Town Awards Cup Winners

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2009 - Whiteside County; Sauk Valley Food Bank

2008 - Mundelein; After School Coalition

2007 - McLeansboro; Kid's Kingdom

2006 - Champaign County; Women In Transition

2005 - Adams County; Camp Callahan

2004 - Kankakee County; Garden of Prayer Youth Center

2003 - Country Club Hills; Emergency Services & Disaster Agency

2002 - Champaign County; Crisis Nursery

2001 - Effingham County; Ballard Nature Center

2000 - Newton; Newton Public Library and Museum

1999 - Whiteside County; Agape Care Center

1998 - Ullin; River-to-River Residential Facilities

1997 - Fairbury; Downtown Revitalization

1996 - Woodford County; Heart House

1995 - Tamms; Economic Development Attraction Activities

1994 - Hinsdale; Wellness House

1993 - Hoffman Estates; Children's Advocacy Center

1992 - Joliet; Drug Free Youth In Touch

1991 - Quincy; Good News

1990 - Peoria; Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center

1989 - Mason City; Nursing Home

1988 - Brown County; Economic Development Attraction Activities

1987 - Evanston; Council of Elders

1986 - Royal; Community Building

1985 - Decatur; Decatur Advantage

1984 - Barry; Community Swimming Pool

1983 - Wilsonville; Environmental Cleanup Advocacy